

MEMORIAL

OF

MRS. ANN MIX,

WIDOW OF MERVINE P. MIX, LATE A COMMANDER IN THE U. S. NAVY,

PROPOSING TO

*Sell to the government his patent for the "Manger Stopper," for chain cables.*

DECEMBER 22, 1845.

Referred to the Committee on Naval Affairs, and ordered to be printed.

*To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled :*

The memorial of Ann Mix, of Brooklyn, in the State of New York, widow of the late Mervine P. Mix, esq., a master commandant in the navy of the United States,

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

That your petitioner's husband belonged to the navy, and was in the service during the late war as a lieutenant, and that he continued in it until his death, which occurred of a disease contracted upon the inhospitable coast and rivers of Florida, leaving your petitioner with a large and helpless family in a destitute situation as to property and means of support; and your petitioner further shows, that by the long experience of her said husband in the navy as aforesaid, he had observed the great difficulty and danger of letting out the large chain cables now used on board our ships of war, frequently destroying the lives of the seamen employed, and that vessels were frequently lost, damaged, or greatly endangered, through the want of means to cast anchor suddenly upon the emergency, and control the "paying" out of the cables attached thereto;—wherefore, he invented an apparatus to be attached to such vessels to supply the deficiency, and perfectly remedy the inconvenience, which has been patented to him according to the laws of the United States, and generally adopted and used on board of our national ships by an order of the honorable navy board of commissioners.

The invention, and its use and advantages, are fully described and certified in the printed statement hereunto annexed, and which your petitioner

Richie & Heiss, print.

prays may be considered as forming part of her memorial, and from which the great value of the invention may be known.

And your memorialist further prays, that inasmuch as this invention of her late lamented husband is one of utility to the navy of the United States, and appertains almost exclusively to the advantage of heavy armed public ships, that your honorable bodies will be pleased to pass a law to give to your memorialist such compensation, for the value of such invention, as to your honorable bodies may seem just and reasonable, to the end that it may be used and adopted universally on board our ships, and the necessities of your petitioner relieved by the disposition of this her only property to a grateful country, for whose welfare her husband and protector devoted and offered up his life.

And your memorialist further prays the consideration of the following extracts of letters received by her.

From Commodore Crane, commandant of the navy yard, Portsmouth, N. H., dated April, 1839, expressing his great regard for the late Captain Mix, and his inducement therefrom to do all in his power for his family: adds, that two ships which were being fitted out by him (Concord and Lexington) had the Mix manger stopper fitted on board, and that a vessel *then building* would also be furnished with them.

From Commodore Warrington, commandant of the Gosport navy yard, 1839. In reply to the *value in money* of the Mix manger stopper, he says:

"I would gladly give the desired information, if I possessed it, or had any means of such a conclusion as would be correct. The value of such an improvement can be fixed with propriety only by consultation with various persons of experience, who, for that purpose, should have the means of frequent conversations, and the facilities afforded by frequent interviews. That it is of *considerable* utility there can be no doubt; nor can there be a doubt that its general use and approval by all those of the navy who have tried it entitle you, as the representative of Captain Mix, to remuneration."

From Commodore Downes, commandant of the Boston navy yard in 1838, to Captain M. P. Mix:

"I will hand the lithograph of your stoppers for chain cables to Commodore Hull, Captain Smith, and Captain Stockton, as you requested. I am having your stopper fitted on board the Ohio. I think well of it, and would recommend its being put on board of all vessels of the navy."

From Captain W. B. Shubrick, commanding Macedonian, the flag-ship of the West India squadron in 1839:

"I am sorry I cannot give an opinion in relation to your patent manger stoppers, as I have never seen them in operation. It was my wish to try them in this ship, but was unfortunately so late in my application to the commissioners that they could not be fitted without detaining the ship especially for that purpose. My impression with respect to them, from the report of those in whose opinions I have great confidence, is certainly very favorable; and if I should at any time have it in my power, I will put them in the Macedonian."

Commodore I. Chauncey, president of the navy board, to Commander Mix, in 1838:

"The board has this day issued a circular to the commandants of the navy yards, authorizing the use of your manger stopper on board our vessels of war, upon their being applied for by their commanding officers, and herewith you will receive a copy of the same for your information."

Captain F. Buchanan, superintendent of the naval school, Nov. 14, 1845:

"In reply to your letter of the 11th inst., requesting my opinion of the 'Mix stopper,' which was used on board the U. S. ship Vincennes while under my command, I testify with confidence to its usefulness, and consider it one of the most valuable 'stoppers' for chain cables I have ever seen."

From L. M. Goldsborough, in 1839, attached to the frigate United States as 1st lieutenant:

"Commodore Ridgely has ordered two of your late husband's improved stoppers to be made for this ship, and they are now being constructed. In common with a great number of my brother officers, I believe in the efficiency of my friend's improvement in the management of chain cables, and am disposed to award great credit for his invention."

From Commander L. M. Goldsborough, November 10, 1845:

"I have served in four of our men-of-war provided with Mix's manger stopper; two of which vessels I commanded, and of the other two I was in capacity of first lieutenant; and I do not hesitate to say, that I ever found it a most admirable contrivance, and still regard it as an indispensable adjunct to using the chain cable with facility and convenience. I have seen several other inventions intended to answer the same end, but none of them in my judgment possessed equal advantages."

Extract from Lieut. James H. Ward:

"NAVAL SCHOOL, Annapolis, November 20, 1845.

"MY DEAR MRS. MIX: I have received your letter of the 14th instant, asking my opinion of the manger stopper, invented by your husband, the late Captain Mix.

"I think no ship, unprovided with some such stopper before 'the bits,' can, under all circumstances of weather, character of bottom, and depth of water on anchorage ground, work her chain cables with the certainty and celerity which are essential in the military operations of a ship of war.

"I am cognizant of several cases in which serious delay has occurred for the want of a 'manger stopper,' and several cases in which, for the same reason, the anchor has dropped to the bottom, and brought the ship up when under full headway. In one of these last cases, a frigate's cable and anchor were lost, and in two others the safety of a frigate was hazarded, and an expense of several hundred dollars incurred. With a 'manger stopper,' neither of these cases would have occurred. They happen often, and are given here to illustrate the value of such a contrivance.

"Of the various stoppers for effecting this object, no one is generally regarded with favor except that of Captain Mix. I have served as first lieutenant in a frigate having a French stopper on one side and a 'Mix stopper' on the other. The French stopper was heaviest, most costly, most complicated, and used with least confidence. Hence, I considered Mix's by far the best.

"This experiment with the French stopper was regarded with so little favor, that it has not been repeated. Mix's stopper has continued in general use. In my opinion, it is, in simplicity and fitness for its purposes, a perfect instrument."

From Captain Wilkes, commanding exploring expedition:

"WASHINGTON, December 1, 1845.

"MADAM: Your letter relative to the invention of your late husband, Captain M. P. Mix, it affords me great pleasure to speak; as a messenger stopper in such situation as heaving up the anchors it is very essential, and I have

often used it on board the Vincennes, during the exploring expedition, with great advantage, and consider it a most useful appendage to a ship to avoid accident, as well as giving facility to getting up the anchors.

"I hope you may be successful in your endeavors to obtain a suitable remuneration from the government, as the price allowed for its use on board our national ships was altogether inadequate to its value, as I repeatedly told your husband.

"Captain Hudson at the navy yard, will, I am sure, readily give his testimony relative to its value on board our national ships."

From Commodore Wm. B. Shubrick, chief of Bureau of Provisions and Clothing :

"WASHINGTON, December 4, 1845.

"DEAR MADAM: I have received your letter of the 25th ultimo. The 'manger stopper' invented by your late husband has been used in two ships that I have commanded, and I take pleasure in saying that it is admirably calculated for the purpose for which it is intended. By a standing order of the department, it is now used in all ships of the navy, if their commanders wish it."

And your memorialist will ever pray.

ANN MIX.

AMERICAN INSTITUTE, New York, Dec. 5, 1845.

I hereby certify, that at the twelfth annual fair of the American Institute, held in the month of October, 1839, a *silver medal* was awarded to Mrs. Mix, widow of Commander Mix of the United States navy, for a *patent manger stopper for chain cables—a meritorious article*; and that no other invention for that purpose has received a premium from the Institute.

[L. s.] In testimony whereof, I have affixed the seal of the Institute, and my signature.

H. MEIGS, *Recording Secretary*.